


# Phosphorus

## Large Lake Ecosystem Modeling & Prediction

**Craig Stow**  
Integrated Physical & Ecological Modeling & Forecasting






Image from  
8-23-15

1/14

Main topic:

The need for better Phosphorus (P) modeling  
Involves interplay of everything we do here  
Emphasizes our place in the broader Great Lakes community

As an example:

Groups Craig Stow/GLERL is involved in:  
Lake Huron panel last fall  
Hosted Cladophora workshops Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) ANNEX 4 at GLERL

Working on Lake Erie (done more or less), Moving forward to Lake Ontario, will circle back to Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay again

Recent data on Saginaw Bay:

Saginaw Bay isn't meeting P targets

1978 targets

When the dreissenid mussels invaded Saginaw Bay the P retention capacity went up. Mussel filtering results in more P retention in Saginaw Bay, P not circulating out to Lake Huron.

Sag Bay is main source of P for Lake Huron.

P levels in main body of Lake Huron have dropped (below L Superior).

The food web has effectively collapsed, from bottom up to birds.

Further proposed reductions of P in Saginaw Bay would further reduce amount of P available to Lake Huron.

Deciding on a regulatory P level for Lake Huron will be a complex decision once ANNEX 4 rotates back around to the lake.

**Guest editor for JGLR special issue "Managing multiple stressors in Saginaw Bay, 2012."**

## 1978 GLWQA

4 Models provided guidance:

Vollenweider, DiToro et al., Chapra, Bierman et al.

Supported by info/technology available at that time

The Lake Erie phosphorus load shall not  
exceed:

**11,000 tonnes/year**

which probably translates to about 15 ug/L

Based on parallel development of 4 models. GLERL had an active part in one of them.

1986

ES&T  
FEATURES

## Great Lakes water quality improvement

*The strategy of phosphorus discharge control is evaluated*

Joseph V. De Pinto  
Thomas C. Young  
Lyn M. Meliroy  
Clarkson University  
Potsdam, N.Y. 13676

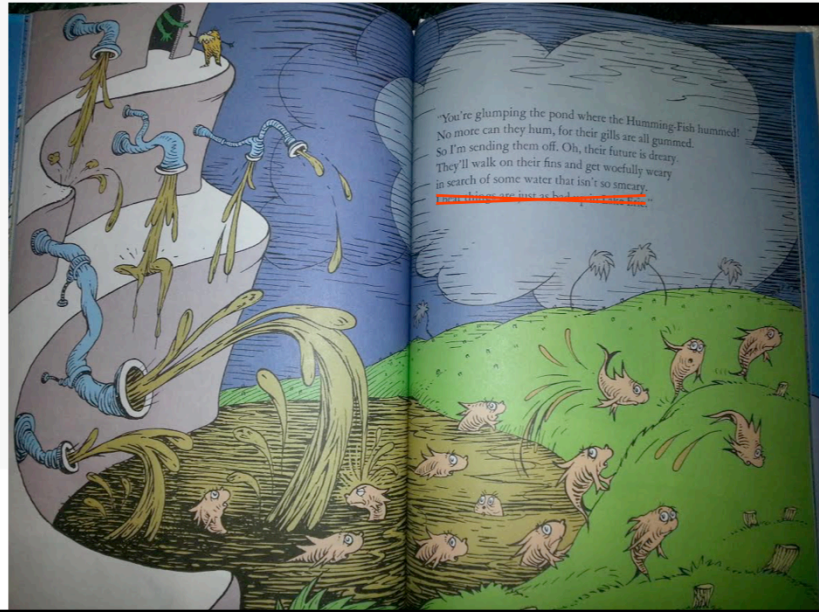
The impressive size of the Great Lakes has not been enough to shield them from many of the water quality problems that have resulted from the tremendous human population explosion within their basin (Table 1). Over the past 180 years the population resid-

quest of either the U.S. or Canadian government, or both. These studies, designed to formulate recommendations to the two governments, are known as "references."

Since its inception the IJC has issued more than 50 references; some of its

Mission Accomplished !

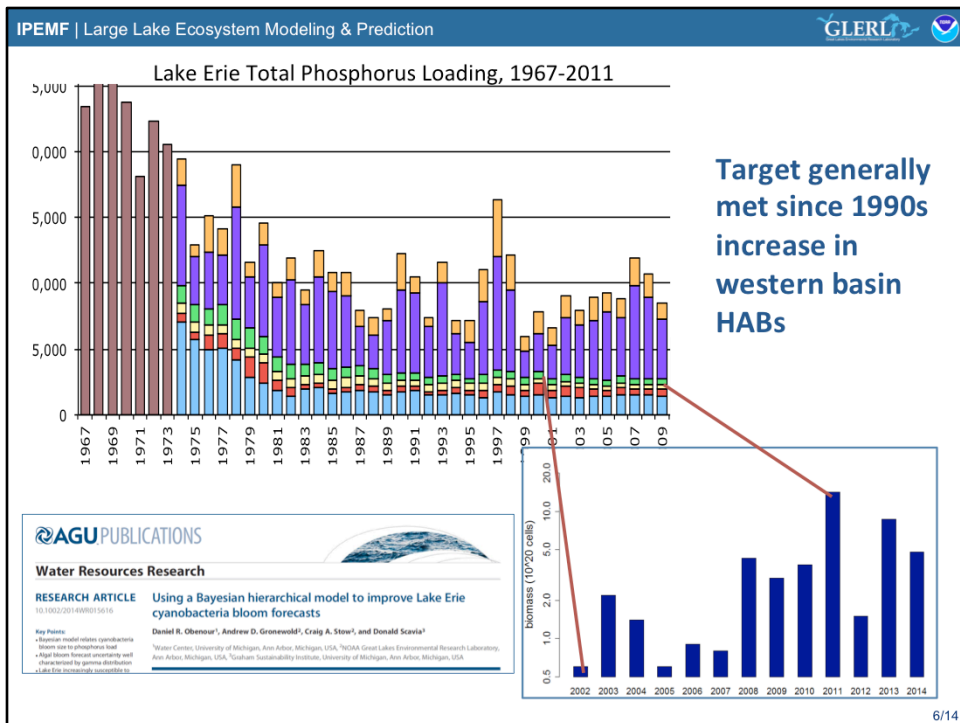
1986





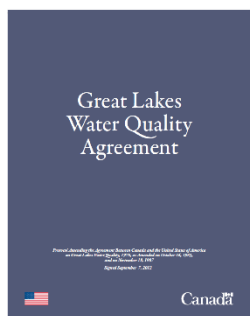
1986





Data from Dave Dolan, University of Wisconsin Green Bay

## 2012 – New GLWQA



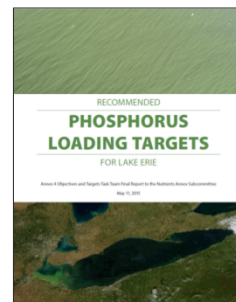
### Annex 4 - Nutrients

Six Lake Ecosystem Objectives

Update Substance Objectives (target concentrations)

Update Phosphorus Load Targets

Do this for Lake Erie within 3 years (February 2016)



Annex 4 Subcommittee has been meeting regularly since late 2013  
Recommended Phosphorus Loading Targets Report - May 2015  
Developed using 9 parallel models

## 2012 – New GLWQA

ECOLOGICAL MODELLING 314 (2008) 219–241

available at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ecolmodel](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ecolmodel)

**A two-dimensional ecological model of Lake Erie: Application to estimate dreissenid impacts on large lake plankton populations**

Hongyan Zhang<sup>a,\*</sup>, David A. Culver<sup>a</sup>, Leon Boegman<sup>b</sup>

Journal of Great Lakes Research 38 (2012) 405–416

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Great Lakes Research

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jglr](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jglr)

**A simple 1-dimensional, climate based dissolved oxygen model for the central basin of Lake Erie**

Daniel K. Rucinski<sup>a,b,c</sup>, Dmitry Beletsky<sup>b,c</sup>, Joseph V. DePinto<sup>a,b</sup>, David J. Schwab<sup>d</sup>, Donald Scavia<sup>b,e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Limnology, 300 Ave. Orin, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA  
<sup>b</sup> School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan, 440 Church Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA  
<sup>c</sup> Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystem Research, 440 Church Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA  
<sup>d</sup> Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, 480 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA  
<sup>e</sup> Graham Sustainability Institute, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, USA

## AGU PUBLICATIONS

## Water Resources Research

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

10.1002/2014WR015616

## Using a Bayesian hierarchical model to improve Lake Erie cyanobacteria bloom forecasts

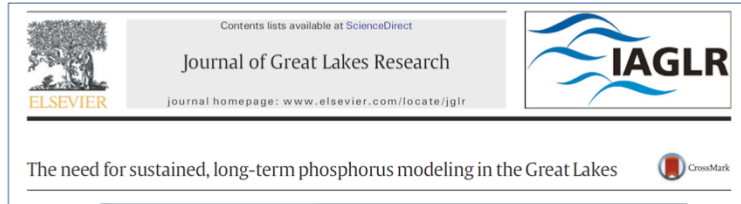
Daniel R. Obenour<sup>1</sup>, Andrew D. Gronewold<sup>2</sup>, Craig A. Stow<sup>2</sup>, and Donald Scavia<sup>3</sup>

## Key Points:

- Bayesian model relates cyanobacteria bloom size to phosphorus load
- Algal bloom forecast uncertainty well characterized by gamma distribution
- Lake Erie increasingly susceptible to

<sup>1</sup>Water Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, <sup>2</sup>NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, <sup>3</sup>Graham Sustainability Institute, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

## Science Advisory Board – review modeling process - December 2014



Thus, it would be prudent for the Great Lakes community to invest in a sustained, coordinated modeling effort to carry us into the future.

Ideally this endeavor would include:

- A suite of models of differing complexity and resolution, based on alternative assumptions.
- An ongoing skill assessment of model capabilities.
- Models with the capacity for rigorous uncertainty analysis.
- A home on the internet with documented code and supporting data available to make the process as transparent as possible and allow the community to use and vet the models.
- Regular updating.
- A standing committee to guide development and implementation.
- Support by well-designed monitoring program.


Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

**Environmental Modelling & Software**

Journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/enversoft](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/enversoft)

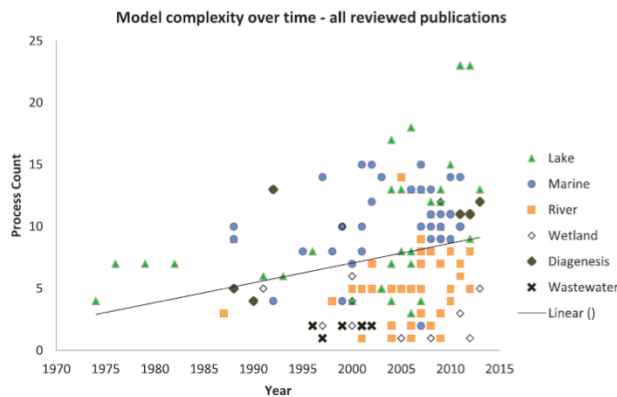
State of the art in modelling of phosphorus in aquatic systems:  
Review, criticisms and commentary<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Barbara J. Robson<sup>\*</sup>



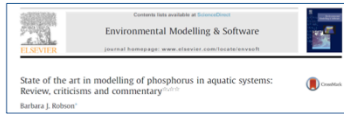
#### 10. How complex should models be?

It is clear that aquatic biogeochemical models are becoming more complex, but there is no clear agreement regarding whether this is appropriate.

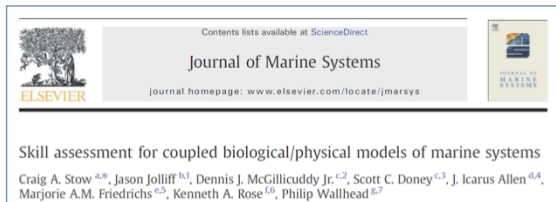


- Greater model complexity = greater predictive accuracy?
- Results equivocal
- As a community we are not very good about assessing, reporting accuracy/reliability

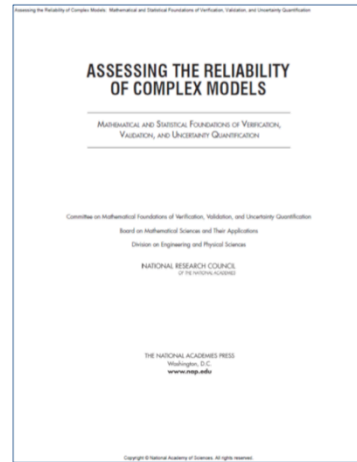
## Future Directions



This tension between physiological realism and model parsimony can only be resolved by assessing the actual performance of models with different structures.



Develop, test models of differing complexity, evaluate relative performance



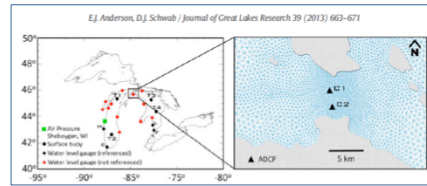


It is not appropriate to ask whether  
a model is right or wrong.

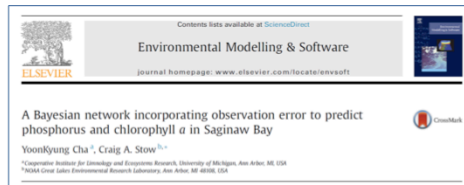
Instead we should ask:

**What is its domain of utility?**

## GLERL has expertise in fine-scale, simulation modeling:



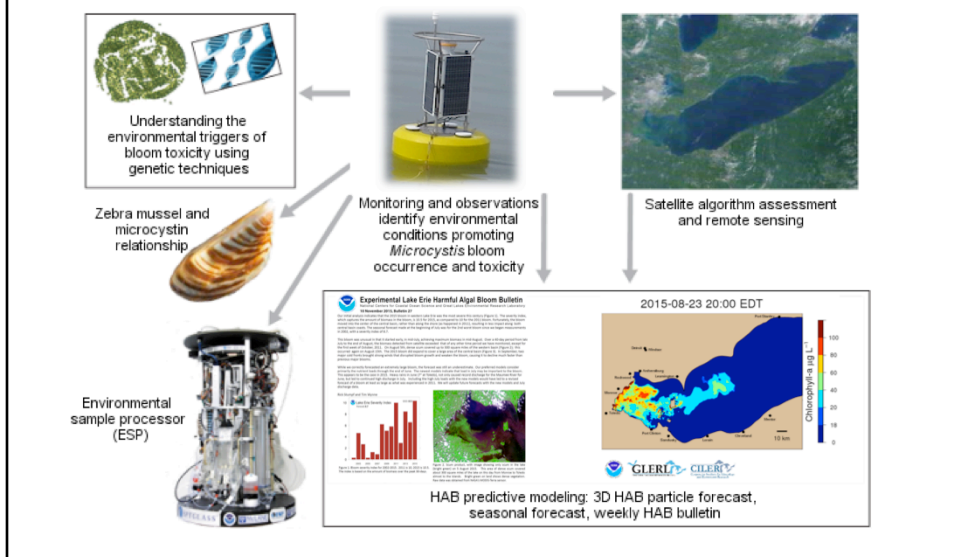
and contemporary, probabilistic approaches:



$$L(z_b, y_b, x_b | \theta) = \prod_{b=1}^B \frac{1}{(2\pi\sigma_b^2)^{1/2}} e^{-\frac{(y_b - \mu_b)^2}{2\sigma_b^2}} \prod_{b=1}^B \frac{1}{(2\pi\sigma_b^2)^{1/2}} e^{-\frac{(x_b - \mu_b)^2}{2\sigma_b^2}} \prod_{b=1}^B \frac{1}{(2\pi\sigma_b^2)^{1/2}} e^{-\frac{(z_b - \mu_b)^2}{2\sigma_b^2}}$$

- Clear implications for developing models for transition to operations
- Draws on strengths (Modeling, Observations, Process Research)
- Supports our HABs program
- Serve a long-term need in the Great Lakes community
- Partners Essential – Federal, State, Provincial Agencies, Academia

## An integrated approach to studying HABs



### Overarching research statement:

Understanding the drivers of bloom ecology will aid in enhancing predictive models that forecast bloom size, location AND toxicity

Phosphorus

Thank You  
Questions?



14/14